

## Members

Rep. Peggy Welch, Chair  
Rep. Tiny Adams  
Rep. Gloria Goeglein  
Rep. Matt Whetstone  
Sen. Becky Skillman, Vice-Chair  
Sen. Rose Antich  
Sen. Mark Blade  
Sen. Steven Johnson  
John Catey  
Garland Ferrell  
Frank Fritch  
Al Dillon  
Richard Dodge  
Vernon Jewell  
Richard Jones  
Douglas Lechner  
Jean Paul Lushin  
Bill Mansard  
Gloria Stephani



# COUNTY GOVERNMENT STUDY COMMISSION

*Legislative Services Agency*  
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## LSA Staff:

Beverly Holloway, Fiscal Analyst for the  
Committee  
James Jett, Attorney for the Commission  
Ross Hooten, Attorney for the Commission

Authority: P.L. 109-1997

## MEETING MINUTES<sup>1</sup>

**Meeting Date:** August 22, 2000  
**Meeting Time:** 10:00 A.M.  
**Meeting Place:** State House, 200 W. Washington St.,  
Room 404  
**Meeting City:** Indianapolis, Indiana  
**Meeting Number:** 1

**Members Present:** Rep. Peggy Welch, Chair; Rep. Matt Whetstone; Sen. Becky Skillman, Vice-Chair; Sen. Rose Antich; Sen. Mark Blade; Garland Ferrell; Frank Fritch; Richard Jones; Vernon Jewell; Douglas Lechner; John Catey; Al Dillon; Jean Paul Lushin; Bill Mansard.

**Members Absent:** Rep. Tiny Adams; Rep. Gloria Goeglein; Sen. Steven Johnson; Gloria Stephani; Richard Dodge.

Rep. Welch, Chair of the Commission, called the meeting to order. Commission members introduced themselves.

Beverly Holloway, Fiscal Analyst for the Commission, reviewed the Commission's charge. The Commission was established by P.L. 109-1997 to study the following issues:

1. How to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of county government by examining the function and duties associated with all elected county officials and departments of county government. The Commission shall focus on how these functions and duties relate to the functions and duties of other elected county officials, departments of county government, and other state and local governmental entities.
2. The functions and duties of elected county officials and departments of county government that should be more clearly defined by statute to avoid disputes over allocation of power in county government.
3. The functions and duties of elected county officials and departments of county government that should be eliminated, altered, or reassigned to other elected county officials, departments of county

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<sup>1</sup> Exhibits and other materials referenced in these minutes can be inspected and copied in the Legislative Information Center in Room 230 of the State House in Indianapolis, Indiana. Requests for copies may be mailed to the Legislative Information Center, Legislative Services Agency, 200 West Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2789. A fee of \$0.15 per page and mailing costs will be charged for copies. These minutes are also available on the Internet at the General Assembly homepage. The URL address of the General Assembly homepage is <http://www.ai.org/legislative/>. No fee is charged for viewing, downloading, or printing minutes from the Internet.

government, or other state or local governmental entities.

4. The functions and duties of county commissioners in Lake County and St. Joseph County and how their legislative and executive powers compare to the county commissioners in other counties.

#### **Sen. Becky Skillman, Vice-Chair**

Sen. Skillman reviewed SEA 222-00 (Exhibit 1) and HEA 1391-00 (Exhibit 2). She stated that both pieces of legislation were a result of testimony and discussions held at previous meetings of the County Government Study Commission. Sen. Skillman stated that SCR 10-00 (Exhibit 3) was a recommendation of the Commission. She stated that the Legislative Council assigned the issue of the fiscal impact of the courts upon county budgets to the Commission on Courts.

#### **Kirk White, Former Monroe County Commissioner and Advisory Board Member of the Coalition on Monitoring Public Efficiency and Tax Expenditures (C.O.M.P.E.T.E.)**

Mr. White stated that county government in Indiana is not able to provide the funds to meet citizen expectations. He stated that the answer has been to raise taxes or cut services. Mr. White stated that he believes that the better answer is to assess the current county structure, be innovative, and make organizational changes. Mr. White provided the Commission with three proposals from the C.O.M.P.E.T.E. report (Exhibit 4).

Commission members asked Mr. White questions and discussion occurred.

#### **Matt Brooks and David Bottorff, Association of Indiana Counties (AIC)**

Mr. Brooks stated that the AIC agrees with some of the proposals presented by Mr. White. Mr. Brooks provided the Commission members with examples of counties that have projects that have been innovative and included multi county cooperation.

Mr. Brooks also described the Development, Improvement, and Preparation for Leadership, Organizational and Management Achievement (D.I.P.L.O.M.A.) program offered by the AIC.

Mr. Bottorff expressed concern regarding the existing assessment system and the role of the county assessor and the township trustee/township assessor. Mr. Bottorff suggested that in some cases the county assessor should have more control in the assessment process.

#### **Steve Buschmann, Indiana Township Association**

Mr. Buschmann stated that the Township Association has always supported options for change but that any change in structure should be adopted to meet the needs of the people who are in an elected office or an appointed position.

#### **Bill Haan, Indiana Association of County Commissioners**

Mr. Haan spoke in support of financial incentives to help counties pay for administrators or county managers. Mr. Haan gave examples of the wide range of qualifications that current county administrators have taken to the position. He also gave examples of the varying amounts of responsibility that county administrators have.

#### **Other Commission Business**

Rep. Welch encouraged the Commission members to review the document *C.O.M.P.E.T.E Board Endorsed Recommendations* (Exhibit 5) prior to the next meeting. Rep. Welch stated that she would like to discuss any or all of the recommendations at the next Commission meeting. Rep. Welch stated that she would like to review the following items at future Commission meetings:

1. Revisit the Commission charge regarding Lake County and St. Joseph County.
2. The lack of local oversight for tax levy money that local mental health centers receive.

3. A presentation by Tim Berry, State Treasurer, regarding a training program for county treasurers.
4. A report from the County Surveyor Association regarding the Association's evaluation.

Rep. Welch stated she also wants to review items that Commission members may have with regard to county government.

Rep. Welch informed Commission members that the Corrections Matters Evaluation Committee is studying the issue of long distance telephone charges assessed at state and county jails.

The next meeting of the County Government Study Commission is September 13 at 1:30 p.m. in Room 404 of the State House.

Future tentative meeting dates for the Commission are September 28, 10:00 a.m.; October 12, 10:00 a.m.; October 24, 10:00 a.m.

There being no further business, Rep. Welch adjourned the meeting.